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## BOOK REVIEWS

*Chicago Traction.* By RALPH E. HEILMAN. American Economic Association Quarterly, July, 1908. 8vo, pp xi+135.

This monograph was prepared as a thesis by the author, during his candidacy for a degree at Northwestern University, the work being done under the direction of Professor John H. Gray. In a sub-title the author characterizes his work as "A Study of the Efforts of the Public to Secure Good Service." The author gives a brief statement concerning the original incorporation of the Chicago City Railway and of the North and West companies now comprising the Chicago Railways Company, summarizes the Ninety-Nine-Year Act, discusses the Humphrey Bill and the Allen Law, the repeal of this law, and the passage of the Mueller Bill—the discussion being developed with a view to showing the attitude of the public toward the traction problem and the traction companies. The companies are represented as trying to get long-term franchises under favorable terms. The public is shown to have protested vigorously against such measures as the Ninety-Nine-Year Act, the Humphrey Bill and the Allen Law, which measures were conceived to give away valuable rights without provision for adequate compensation. The municipal ownership propaganda under Mayor Dunne and the final passage of the present traction ordinances running to the Chicago City Railway and the Chicago Railways Company are treated, and the study concludes with a discussion of these ordinances and of probable future results as regards remuneration of the city and the companies, and as regards improvement of the traction service.

The author fully realizes that his study does not cover the financial history of the companies. It does not trace the effect of the attitude of the public upon the value of the securities nor the distribution of earnings in the past under the early ordinances described. The author does not seem to recognize that the ordinances dealing with the Chicago City Railway and the Chicago Railways Company left unsolved the future status of the Chicago Consolidated Traction, and problems involved in the rehabilitation of its lines comprising 200 miles of street railway connected with the Chicago Railways lines on the North and West Sides, and systems on the South Side comprising over half this mileage. In fact the treatment gives no adequate description of the properties, their mileage, and the physical relations of the lines. It may be noted in this connection that since the author's treatment appeared a new ordinance has been granted to the outlying South Side Companies with provisions concerning control and rehabilitation similar to those of the old companies. There is, however, a zone-transfer provision in this latter ordinance of great importance. The Consolidated Traction Company and its relation to the Chicago Railways is now the subject of litigation and the outcome will probably be a new ordinance giving this company a franchise similar to those of the two large companies or providing for its rehabilitation by the Chicago Railways Company, which now controls it through

stock ownership. These facts are mentioned merely to point out what the author would readily admit, namely, that his treatment by no means exhausts the question discussed. It seems, however, that the author may be justly criticized for omitting to describe the methods of evaluating the traction property by the Traction Evaluation Commission. He gave the methods employed by the Harlan Committee, by the Civic Federation Report, and mentioned the doctrine of the Supreme Court and the Interstate Commerce Commission on this point. After leaving the question the author uses the evaluation of the engineers or the Traction Evaluation Commission for all further discussion but gives no adequate description of the methods of this commission. As the justice or injustice of the return to the city and the companies is treated in a later chapter a discussion of the evaluation assumed seems peculiarly appropriate. In chapter xiv the author states that the commission included the value of the franchises with the value of the physical property but leaves out any discussion of the method by which the commission evaluated a franchise.

Within the limitations above suggested the treatment is a valuable history of the franchise grants to street railways with a fairly good summary of the provisions of the latest ordinances. The author's estimate of operating expenses and reserves as 78 per cent. after the period of rehabilitation, is too high according to the current estimates on this subject, 70 per cent. including the reserves being probably a more prevalent estimate. His conclusions based on this estimate would accordingly be erroneous. The court records in these traction cases are being bound in a series of between twenty and thirty volumes, so that any one who wishes to make a further study of the question will find an abundance of material. He will also find a sympathetic co-operation from the managers of the companies, who have adopted a policy of wide-open publicity.

SPURGEON BELL

CHICAGO

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*Confessions of a Railroad Signalman.* By JAMES O. FAGAN. Boston: Houghton, Mifflin Co., 1908. 8vo, pp. 181:

This little volume on railroad accidents might have had as a sub-title "A Plea for Personality" or "An Arraignment of Railroad Labor Organizations." It is a suggestive work written by a man who thinks for himself and knows how to express his thoughts. He is fortunate in his twenty-seven years of experience as a telegraph operator and signalman. Otherwise he would be assailed from certain quarters as academic and theoretical for he has brought out into the open some considerations which are neither pleasing nor reassuring.

Having been written originally as essays for popular consumption the book is not as coherent and well-knit as one would wish, but the three main propositions of the author stand out fairly clearly. (1) The primary cause of railroad accidents is the negligence of employees. "Fully 85 per cent. of the fatalities that occur on our roads" can be traced to this. Vast expenditures for safety appliances and signal systems will avail little in the face of such a situation. (2) The proper cure for this negligence is stern discipline, but a survey of the systems of discipline in use results in their being characterized as inadequate and useless—as framed to secure harmony between management and employees